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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *Auguſt* the 2d, 1753.

Fallit te incautum pietas tua.—— VIRG.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

YOU will be told at the cloſe of this letter the reaſon why you are troubled with it. I am a clergyman; and one, I hope, who has hitherto, as near as the imperfections of his nature would admit, performed the duties of his function. I hope alſo that I ſhall give no offence by ſaying, that I have been more aſſiduous in teaching the moral duties of chriſtianity, than in explaining its myſteries, or in gaining the aſſent of men's tongues to what their minds can have no conception of. The great duty of benevolence, as it was always my ſecond care to inculcate, ſo it was my ſecond delight to practice. But I

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am conſtrained by a fatal ſucceſſion of experiences to declare, that I have been unhappy in the ſame proportion that I have been benevolent; and have debaſed Myſelf, as often as I have endeavoured to raiſe the dignity of human nature.

In the year one thouſand ſeven hundred and thirty eight, when I was curate of a pariſh in York, the following article appeared in all the London news-papers.

"York, March 25th. This day William Wyatt "and John Sympſon were executed here for houſe-"breaking. They behaved in a very penitent manner, "but made no confeſſion. At the tree the hangman "was intoxicated with liquor; and ſuppoſing there "were three ordered for execution, was going to put "one of the ropes about the parſon's neck as he ſtood "in the cart, and was with much difficulty prevented "by the goaler from ſo doing."

This parſon, ſir, was myſelf; and indeed every part of the article was literally true, except that the goaler was equally intoxicated with the hangman, and that it was not till after the rope was forced about my neck; and the cart juſt going off, that the ſheriff's officers interfered and rectified the miſtake.

Thus was I in danger of an ignominious death by performing the duties of my office, and, from a tender regard to the ſouls of theſe poor wretches, watching their laſt moments in order to ſoften their hearts, and bring them to a confeſſion of the crime for which they were to ſuffer. But the indignity offered to me at the gallows was not all. There are in York, Mr. Fitz-Adam, as well as in London, ſcoffers at the clergy; and I aſſure you upon the veracity of my function, that I hardly ever walked the ſtreets of that city afterwards, without being ſaluted by the name of the *half-hanged parſon*.

Time had ſcarcely taken off the edge of this ridicule, when a worſe accident befell me. It was my misfortune to ſend an advertiſement to the daily advertiſer, ſetting forth, "That if a certain young woman" (who happened, though I knew it not, to be the moſt noted harlot upon the town, and who then kept a coffee-houſe in Covent-Garden) "would apply to the reverend Mr. "W. B." (which was myſelf, and my name printed at full length) "at the blue boar inn in Holbourn, ſhe "would hear of ſomething greatly to her advantage."

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THE occaſion of this advertiſement was literally thus. The young woman in queſtion had formerly been a ſervant at York, and had been baſely and wickedly ſeduced by her maſter; who dying a few years after, and feeling the utmoſt remorſe for ſo injurious an act, was willing to make this unhappy creature all the atonement in his power, by putting privately into my hands a hundred pounds to be paid her at his deceaſe; and as he ſuppoſed her to be in ſome obſcure ſervice in London, he conjured me in the moſt ſolemn manner to find her out, and to deliver the money into her own hands.

IT was to acquit myſelf of this truſt that I came up to town, and put the above-mentioned advertiſement into the daily advertiſer. The young woman in conſequence of it came the ſame day to my inn, and having convinced me that ſhe was the real perſon (though I wondered to ſee her ſo fine a lady) and having received the donation with great modeſty and thankfulneſs, very obligingly invited me to a reſidence at her houſe during my ſtay in London. I made her my acknowledgments, and the more readily embraced the propoſal, as ſhe added that her houſe was large, and that the young ladies, her lodgers (for ſhe lett lodgings, ſhe ſaid, to young ladies) were particularly pleaſed with the converſation of the clergy.

I DINED with her that day, and continued till evening in the houſe, without the leaſt ſuſpicion of the occupation of its inhabitants; though I could not help obſerving that they treated me with extraordinary freedom; that their boſoms were uncovered; and that they were not quite ſo ſcrupulous upon certain occaſions as our Yorkſhire young women: but as I had never been in town before, and had heard great talk of the freedom of London ladies, I concluded that it was the faſhionable behaviour; which though I did not extremely like, I forbore through good manners to find fault with. At about ſeven in the evening, as I was drinking tea with two of the ladies, I was broke in upon by ſome young gentlemen, one of whom happened to be the ſon of a near neighbour of mine at York, who the moment he ſaw me ſwore a great oath, "That I was the honeſteſt "parſon in England; for that the boldeſt wencher of "them all would ſcruple to be ſitting in a public room "at a bawdy-houſe with a brace of whores, without "locking the door."

A LOUD laugh, in which all the company joined, prevented my reproving this young gentleman as I thought he deſerved; but the language and behaviour of the ladies to theſe gentlemen, and their coarſe and indecent jeſts both upon me and upon my cloth, opened my eyes to ſee where and with whom I was. I ran down ſtairs with the utmoſt precipitation, and early the next morning took horſe for York; where by the aſſiduity of the above-mentioned young gentleman, my ſtory arrived before me, and I was ridiculed by half my acquaintance for putting myſelf to the trouble and expence of a journey to town for a brace of wenches, when I muſt undoubtedly have known that a ſcore of them at York would gladly have obliged me for half the money.

IT was in vain for me to aſſert my innocence by telling the whole ſtory; I was a ſecond time made ridiculous, and my function rendered uſeleſs in the place where I lived, by the punctual performance of my duty, in religiouſly obſerving the laſt requeſt of a dying friend.

I QUITTED York ſoon after this laſt diſgrace, and got recommended, though with ſome difficulty, to a curacy in Lincolnſhire. Here I lived happily for a conſiderable time, and became the favourite companion of the ſquire of the pariſh. He was a keen ſportſman, hearty in his friendſhips, bitter in his reſentments, and implacable to poachers. It ſo happened, that from about the time of my coming to the pariſh, this gentleman's park and the country about it were ſo ſhamefully robbed of hares, that every body was exclaiming againſt the thief. For my own part, as I thought it my duty to detect knavery of every kind, and was fond of every occaſion of teſtifying my gratitude to my patron, I walked out early and late to diſcover this midnight robber. At laſt I ſucceeded in my ſearch, and caught him in the very act of laying his ſnares; and who ſhould he be but the game-keeper of my benefactor! This impudent fellow, who ſaw himſelf detected, had the addreſs to cry out thief firſt; and ſeizing me by the collar, late as it was, dragged me to his maſter's houſe. I was really ſo aſtoniſhed at his conſummate aſſurance, that I heard myſelf accuſed without the power of ſpeaking; and as a farther proof of my guilt, there was found, upon ſearching me, a great quantity of wire and other things, the uſe of which was ſufficiently obvious, and which my wicked accuſer had artfully conveyed into my pocket as he was leading me to my judge.

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To be as little prolix as I can, I was impriſoned, tried, and convicted of the fact; and after having ſuffered the utmoſt rigour of the law, was obliged at laſt to take ſhelter in town, to avoid the thouſand indignities that were offered me in the country.

To particularize every misfortune that has happened to me in London, would be to exceed the bounds of your paper. I ſhall only inform you of the occurrences of laſt night.

It was paſt twelve when I was returning to my lodgings from viſiting a ſick friend. As I paſſed along the Strand I heard at a little diſtance from me the ſound of blows and the ſcreams of a woman. I quickened my pace, and immediately perceived a very pretty young creature upon her knees, intreating a ſoldier for mercy, who by the fury in his looks, and his uplifted cudgel, ſeemed determined to ſhew none. Common humanity, as well as a ſenſe of my duty, impelled me to ſtop and make my remonſtrances to this barbarous man. The effects of theſe remonſtrances were, that I ſoon after found myſelf upon the ground, awaked as it were from a trance, with my head broke, my body bruiſed, my pockets rifled, and the ſoldier and his lady no where to be found.

Alas! Mr. Fitz-Adam, if this had been the only misfortune of the night, I had gone home contented; but I had a ſeverer one to undergo. I was comforting myſelf as I walked along that I had acted the part of a chriſtian in regard to theſe wretches; when a loud cry of thieves and murder, and immediately after it the ſight of a gentleman ſtruggling with two ill-looking fellows again alarmed me. All bruiſed and bloody as I was, I flew without heſitation to his aſſiſtance; and being of an athletic make and conſtitution, in a very few minutes delivered him from their clutches; who as ſoon as he ſaw himſelf at liberty, made the moſt natural uſe of it—by running away. I was now left to the mercy of two ſtreet-robbers, as I thought them, both of whom had ſo ſecurely faſtened upon me as to prevent my eſcape. But while I was beginning to tell them that I had been already robbed, to my utter confuſion they diſcovered to me that they were bailiffs; that they had arreſted the perſon whom I *reſcued* for thirty pounds; and that I muſt give ſecurity for the debt, or go inſtantly to priſon.

To come to the cloſe of my unhappy narration, they carried me to one of their houſes: from whence I ſent to the